

BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN

December 21, 2021 at 7:30 PM

Mayor Craig called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Cavanaugh, Stewart, Long, Roy, T. Sapienza, S. Sharonov,
O'Neil, Levasseur, Terrio, E. Sapienza, Barry, Gamache

Absent: Aldermen Shaw and Hirschmann

Mayor Craig recessed the meeting to allow the special Public Participation meeting to continue.

Mayor Craig called the meeting back to order.

COVID-19 Public Health Update.

Anna Thomas, Public Health Director, stated to date I unfortunately have to report that we have had close to 20,000 cases of COVID-19 among Manchester residents and sadly we are remembering the lives of 267 residents so far lost to the virus since the beginning of the pandemic. We are experiencing clusters and outbreaks in certainly some of our public schools and some of our private schools and our long-term facilities and a few other institutions. This morning we started our day with 73 Covid positive patients between our two hospitals who are sick enough to be admitted and filling up an inpatient or ICU bed and our current rate of community transmission of new cases over the past 14 days is 1397.0 per 100,000 and we want that rate to be less than 50 as a reminder. Our seven-day test positivity rate over the past seven days is 13.8% and we want that to be less than 5%. The good news is that we know that at least 62,000 Manchester residents have received their first dose of vaccine and we have been told that a fixed vaccination site will be coming to Manchester in mid-January which will help alleviate some of the clinics that we are trying to do out in the community. As a Health Department we continue to conduct mobile clinics just about every single day and schedule these out all the way into the month of January. We will be holding another booster blitz event on January 8. During the last one we vaccinated nearly 700

individuals. We just conducted a special clinic for city employees and their families and we were able to vaccinate 400 individuals. For those of you who have been to the Health Department, I thank you for getting vaccinated. We are holding walk-in clinics at 1528 Elm Street. Those are on Mondays from 9-11 AM and Wednesdays from 2-4 PM. We are seeing 100-150 people during those two hour blocks. A lot of people try to come a little early or they all come at 9 AM or they all come at 2 PM. My recommendation is wait after the first hour when it is not as congested. Please pace yourself. We are not doing appointments yet but if the volume continues we may have to do appointments to manage the amount of people trying to get vaccinated. We are also doing boosters and we are doing all ages; everybody over the age of five. We are now doing the boosters for the 16 and 17 year olds as well. Please be patient with us. We are doing the best we can. Lastly, I want to remind you that we have the Hunt Pool site at 297 Maple Street which is offering free testing seven days a week from 9 AM until 3 PM no appointment necessary and again all ages. I would like to thank Brookside Congregational Church for their Brookside Holiday Lights event this weekend during which they recognized the city's first responders and educators as well as the Health Department for our efforts and service throughout the pandemic. We continue to encourage all residents and their family members over the age of five to get vaccinated and boosted, wear a mask indoors especially where we don't know the mix of vaccinated versus unvaccinated, try to socially distance if you can, wash your hands and please remain safe and free from illness this holiday season. We want people to be together. It is important but we want you to do that safely.

Alderman O'Neil stated if I heard you correctly, you believe that 60,000 residents are vaccinated.

Ms. Thomas responded there is a challenge with the data in the state where when we did away with the state of emergency, the pharmacies were no longer required to report so those numbers are severely underreported. The state is trying to catch up on that. They are telling us to go to the CDC website for those numbers but that only brings it down to a county level and doesn't help us in the city. I don't have a true vaccination rate. I get asked that all the time and it is really frustrating. The ones that we know about are the 62,000 but as you know the pharmacies are vaccinating all over the place

so you can only imagine the volume that we are missing in that number. The state is reassuring us that they are catching up but it is still going to take a little while so I don't have a true number yet. I can tell you that at least 62,000 have had at least one dose.

Alderman O'Neil asked so that may or may not include the pharmacies.

Ms. Thomas answered it does not include any pharmacy data since the state of emergency was lifted. It is fragmented at best and in some cases they have not populated any of the ones that are being done right now.

Alderman O'Neil asked and the pharmacies in Manchester haven't offered to provide their information.

Ms. Thomas responded I think they are providing the information to the state but the state is trying to upload all of that and add it to the database. There is a delay because they don't have the same staff that they had before. We are being told it is going to take a little time to get real numbers unfortunately.

Alderman O'Neil stated regarding testing, you read about long testing lines and we seem to be handling it okay here. Nobody has said to me that they wanted to get tested but couldn't or that they had to stand in line all day.

Ms. Thomas stated I haven't heard any major complaints yet. I have to tell you that we are still in the thick of it. We have to get through the holidays and New Year's. I expect the cases to persist for another two to three weeks. That will hopefully be our peak and I am really hoping that come mid-January our numbers will start to plateau and go down. The data I sent you before the meeting shows that some of our numbers, like our test positivity, I don't want to say are plateauing but there is a little bump there. However, now you are going to add holidays to the mix so I expect that to go up a little more and then I am hoping it is going to come down.

Alderman O'Neil stated I can't thank you enough for your efforts on behalf of the citizens in this city. My family has had experiences with you as have my friends and you and

your staff have been available with guidance. I think you have done a fabulous job on the testing and vaccine side in partnership with the Fire Department. Chief Parent deserves credit for that also. I am proud to be a Manchester resident being able to get through this because of the efforts of the Manchester Health Department.

Alderman Stewart stated thank you Anna and your colleagues at the Health Department for all you are doing. I echo Alderman O'Neil's sentiments that you really are going above and beyond in trying to keep Manchester safe. The numbers that you shared in the email you sent tonight are very concerning. I read in the *Union Leader* today that the first child, a Hillsborough County boy under the age of nine died back in early September. There are also 73 people who are in Manchester hospitals due to Covid. Those are beds that if anything were to happen to any of us or those we love wouldn't be available. I saw comments in your email saying this surge is expected to continue. Like you and all of us, I hope it plateaus and goes down. That said, hope is not a good strategy with regard to containing the virus, especially the variants that we are seeing these days. I noticed last week that Keene instituted an indoor mask mandate. What are your thoughts on that?

Ms. Thomas responded I spoke a little bit about this last time. I think people have a low tolerance for mask mandates and I am just generally speaking. From a public health perspective, I want everyone to wear masks and whether it takes a mandate to do that or not, everybody should be wearing masks more indoors right now. The numbers are just too high to not protect yourself. I am actually more concerned about the city's critical infrastructure and our essential workers and there are lots of them. I don't think there is an appetite. You guys are the policymakers here and you know your constituents best and whether or not that could ever pass here. I am just speaking freely if you don't mind me doing that. I think your sort of in between place before was actually passing a mandate for city buildings, which I felt was a good concession because at least it is protecting the city employees. It is an option. It is something that you have in your toolbox. The reason we would pass a mandate is if you don't feel that people are universally masked. If we are asking people to do it and we want people to make that choice but the majority of people are not doing it, then that is one part of our community mitigation efforts that are thrown out the window. There are only so many

that we have. Certainly vaccination is the most important and there are other things we can do but the masking is the next best thing as well, especially for people who are unvaccinated. It is concerning to me simply because I go out in this community all the time and it is hit or miss when people are universally masking. I wish they would do more. I wish our city departments would be more consistent about it and I am saying it with kid gloves because I know everyone has shared work environments and they make the decisions that are best for them. I do believe at minimum that you should be protecting the city workers somehow and I thought at least doing a city building mandate is not a bad idea. I also would encourage, and our school district is already universally masking which has been an absolute solution to a lot of the need in those schools, but a lot of our private schools and Catholic schools have a blend. Some are masking and some are not. I also would encourage them to be masking at least going two to three weeks into January. There are many that are not masking at all. Again, they are their own facilities and they can make their own policies. I just think if you can do it, especially if you have a short-term window and with something like this you can set a goal and say okay let's just do it up until the first two weeks of January. It is short-term but it is enough to get people through this really significant spike that we are expecting. I am all for that. I personally don't feel that your constituents, and again I am not an alderman so I can only say this from a public health perspective that it makes good sense but there is a reality of what your constituents really want and would be willing to do. You can still pass the mask mandate and they still won't wear a mask. There are just some people who aren't going to do that. Some people choose to and some are just not comfortable with it. Some people will make a medical argument. At this point, it is an individual choice. It is really up to you as policy makers whether or not you feel strongly enough that it is needed for the city. You are all out in the community every day and you know your constituents and your ward and what people are doing and not doing. You know how many people are vaccinated because as you are talking to people I am sure you are getting that feedback all the time. I think each of you have that perspective to share. I am not in every single neighborhood every single day like you all are and I think you are probably the best voice for whether or not it is warranted and whether or not you think the constituents would welcome that and comply with it.

Alderman Stewart stated I would agree with pretty much everything you said. You are right that I am not sure if the appetite is there at present for a city-wide mask mandate. Personally, I wish everyone would wear a mask and if it helped people do that I would be supportive. I understand that the data is still missing the pharmacies but it is still under 50% are fully vaccinated which is disappointing when I go in Hannaford and different places and a lot of people are not wearing masks. All of that said, I would like to say yes everyone wear a mask. I think at a minimum we at least need to protect the health of the employees here in the city and the residents who come to do business. I don't know how my colleagues feel but I would *move to require a mask mandate inside city buildings until such time as the numbers plateau and come down*. Hopefully it is just a temporary measure.

Alderman Long *duly seconded the motion.*

Alderman Levasseur asked so it is going to be a mask mandate for everybody including aldermen.

Alderman Stewart responded anyone inside of a city building.

Alderman Sharonov stated mask mandates have been tried all over the country in many cities, counties and states. Do we have any measurable evidence where a mask mandate has contributed to the decrease of cases and that it actually works as it is sold to the public?

Ms. Thomas answered I think where the evidence is is where you have it in indoor spaces in particular, not just citywide. You can debate the citywide piece. I think it is in these controlled spaces, especially in schools. I think that is where you see the most evidence. Those mask mandates are absolutely controlling clusters and outbreaks in the schools and you can compare school districts that are doing it with those that are not. To me, it is just common sense that if we are going to be together in a shared space for any length of time we know it is being transmitted by droplets and this is just an additional measure. It is not the only measure. It is just one of many that you can choose from.

Alderman Sharonov stated I understand that that is the idea in theory. I am asking for numbers.

Ms. Thomas responded I can supply you with that. The CDC keeps an updated evidence-based place for all of that data and all of those studies. I can provide all of you that link. It is constantly being updated with new studies because keep in mind that this pandemic is only two years old. So it is two years of studies when these mask mandates have been applied and it is as good as that data is.

Alderman Sharonov stated my second question is regarding the penalty for non-compliance. Let's say somebody is not wearing a mask. What is going to happen?

Alderman Stewart asked is that a question for me.

Alderman Sharonov responded to anyone on this Board or the Mayor.

Alderman Sharonov asked is it an unenforceable mandate.

Mayor Craig stated we had a mandate for city employees previously.

Ms. Thomas stated it was a resolution. It wasn't passed as an ordinance if I am not mistaken.

Matthew Normand, City Clerk, stated you passed a resolution that masks were required in all city buildings.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked do you have any input on treatment.

Ms. Thomas answered we don't have the input by say but that is another place where the CDC is constantly posting the most recent treatments and I think I forwarded that link to you. There is a lot of work being done in this arena knowing that certainly we have lots of cases that we are learning from all of the time and what the new treatment

modalities are. There is, again, another updated place where any new study or research or clinical study is being posted and that is on the CDC website.

Mayor Craig asked can we keep the questions to the motion that is before us regarding masks in city buildings.

Alderman Terrio stated Anna the literature that I have seen says that a mask is effective for about 15 to 20 minutes but if you are in an enclosed space after 15 to 20 minutes it becomes less effective. In a city setting it would work if I say come it to register my car if it doesn't take a long time. In a school setting, I don't really see it being effective long-term because you permeate the air with the virus.

Ms. Thomas replied I can send you the studies that are provided to us by the CDC. They are constantly being updated. There is a full on recommendation that there be universal masking in public schools right now.

Alderman Terrio responded I am not talking about the recommendation. I am talking about the study I saw that says a mask is only effective for a short amount of time and once you are in close proximity to someone with Covid for an extended period of time then the mask is not effective.

Ms. Thomas stated there are probably hundreds of studies on masks and masking. I would never look at one study in isolation. I would look at all of them and if you can look at the systematic reviews and the metanalysis that needs to happen then you get a more complete summation of all of those studies together. That is how I look at the research. I try to look at the broader studies that are copulated and then try to draw conclusions from that. You can literally find a study to back your argument on anything honestly. There is always some group that can create a study to back your position and that is what I have found in this field and in this pandemic. There are lots of people who have different opinions about what needs to be done and there are different people who claim they are experts and they weigh in. I try to respect all of it. I am not an expert either in any single field but I do try to gather that data and be as informed as I possibly can. I would never look at one study and I certainly would dissect the study. Part of my

training is to really go deep into those but I would look at a series of studies testing the same hypothesis.

Alderman Terrio asked and...

Ms. Thomas interjected I don't have that in front of me right now. I can go back and compile that because like I said that is being updated all of the time. I can't say well today it is this. I would have to go and pull that for you but I would be happy to do that.

Alderman Terrio stated back in May or June 2020 we enacted a resolution. Is that what the motion is?

Mayor Craig answered yes.

City Clerk Normand stated I have the rule that was passed in front of me right now. There were a number of exceptions but the rule was that "all persons entering, in queue to enter any entrance to, exiting, working in for found in any government building shall wear a face covering over their mouth and nose at all times whenever a person cannot maintain social distancing of six feet from all other persons." Again, there were a number of exceptions to that rule. They were: a) the rule stated above shall not apply to children under 10 years of age; b) the rule stated above shall not apply to persons whom a licensed medical professional has advised that the wearing of a covering poses a risk to said persons due to a diagnosed medical condition; c) the rule stated above shall not apply to any person seeking to avail themselves of a governmental service offered by the City if the City has not provided a reasonable alternative means for the accessing of that service by persons who are not wearing face coverings. A person's refusal to accept a reasonable alternative mean offered by the City shall neither render the alternative means invalid or unreasonable nor excuses with compliance with this rule; d. the rule stated above shall not apply to any polling place, polling location, or any person entering City Hall and the Office of the City Clerk for the express purpose of obtaining a ballot or casting a ballot; e) the rule stated above shall not apply to any person who is requested by a city official or city employee to temporarily lower or remove their face covering for the purpose of identifying a person related to an official

function; f) the rule stated above shall not apply when the person is requested by any city employee engaged in an official function to temporarily lower their covering to facilitate understanding and comprehension of the person's speech. However, compliance with the rule must recommence at any time the person is not actively speaking; g) the rule stated above shall not apply when an evacuation of a government building has been ordered due to an emergency or an emergency signal has been activated and compliance with this rule would endanger the life, safety or health of a person or cause an unreasonable and unsafe delay in complying with the order or alarm signaling the need to evacuate; and h) the rule stated above shall not apply to any police officer, firefighter, paramedic, first responder, or licensed medical professional responding to aid in dealing with an emergency in a government building. So that was the basic framework. There was a provision that this shall continue in effect as long as the State of NH remains in a state of emergency due to the Coronavirus and until modified, rescinded or revoked by a formal action of this Board.

Mayor Craig stated I am assuming that the motion you made was to reinstitute that resolution and we can revisit it at every meeting with data driving the decision.

Alderman Levasseur stated we are not in a state of emergency. What I am getting a little bit nervous about is we have had almost a year since that was put into effect and we have learned a lot. Going back to the fact that the last numbers you had from the state before the pharmacies stopped reporting was 62,000 got their first shot. I would think that covered almost every adult because they didn't have a vaccine for 12 and under. Assuming that 25% to 30% of the people in our city are under the age of 12 or under the age of 18 that weren't getting the vaccine, that is a very good number. I would say that is probably close to 70-80% of our population got at least one shot.

Ms. Thomas stated I wouldn't go that high alderman with all due respect.

Alderman Levasseur stated well it is at least 62% if we are at 100,000 in population.

Ms. Thomas responded for the first does that is correct.

Alderman Levasseur stated a lot of those were probably J&J so there wasn't going to be a second dose for them. Anyway, since that time obviously the numbers have gone up but do the testing kits we have now test for Omnicron?

Ms. Thomas replied they are saying that anything Covid related is going to be caught in these things. I think that is where these variants are going to sort of challenge every single system imaginable and I think this is an area that...we are still learning about Omnicron.

Mayor Craig stated can we keep the questions to the motion on the floor.

Alderman Levasseur stated well he made the motion before I had a chance to ask my questions.

Mayor Craig responded I will go back to you after.

Alderman Levasseur stated okay let me get to the point regarding the motion. The point is we are playing doctors and scientists and first responders. We did not include in the rules and regulations elected officials who come to aldermanic meetings, which is the same thing as going to a polling place. If you are going to vote, you don't have to wear a mask but we can sit here as aldermen...I don't know if this motion is going to include aldermen but you can't stop them from doing their constitutional function. Secondly, we didn't put in there the vaccinated and we didn't put in there the people who have had Covid. Now the science has come quite far and the science shows that if you have had Covid the chance of you getting it again is very low and if you have been vaccinated even if you do get it the chances of getting the serious version is very low. I don't see any major reason why we are going to force a mandate down people's throats when the science is also showing that the masks don't work or they are not as effective as people believe they are. There have been studies on planes and trains and automobiles and in schools. The last one we saw from schools is masks were just as effective as children without them. So we are pushing these mask mandates down people's throats. If you want to protect yourself, then get the vaccination or have Covid and then you will have better antibodies. This mask mandate is...again we are two years past all of this and

the science hasn't shown anything. In other words we have seen breakthroughs now with Elizabeth Warren and the Cory Booker who has it now. We are seeing breakthroughs with people who got their booster shots. I am just telling this Board that I don't understand why it is a rush to go and put a mask mandate in place when a much higher percentage of people are actually vaccinated. Medical treatment is a heck of a lot better. We are just discounting people who have had Covid and are vaccinated and making them put these masks on. You are going to make all of these employees who have been vaccinated and given their boosters wear these masks again. No one else is calling for this. I just want to let people know that we have gone past all of this right now. I was going to ask if you were going to open schools on January 3 or if we are going back to remote. Is that where we are going here?

Mayor Craig replied that is not where we are going and we are staying focused on the motion at hand.

Alderman Levasseur asked is there a mask mandate in the public schools currently.

Mayor Craig answered yes.

Alderman Levasseur asked who voted for that, the school board.

Mayor Craig responded yes.

Alderman Levasseur asked how many children are getting Covid in schools.

Ms. Thomas answered there is actually a dashboard on the city website that shows that. There is Covid activity in the schools.

Alderman Levasseur asked with masks on.

Ms. Thomas replied yes with masks on but keep in mind that there are lots of kids who are not vaccinated and there is a much more contagious variant that we are dealing with. I keep saying to everyone that part of why we are trying to avert more cases...I

agree with you that if someone is vaccinated the theory is that they are not going to end up in a hospital because they have this extra layer of protection but they can still transmit Covid to people who are either unvaccinated or may be immunocompromised. So it is the fact that they are a carrier and can continue to spread this thing throughout the community. It is not just about them and the adverse health effects for them as an individual. It is what they could potentially bring home to their grandparents or other family members. Keep in mind that 1/3 of all of the cases are asymptomatic. There may be a possibility that someone in this room right now is Covid positive and may not feel sick at all. I think this is the challenge. We are on the Omnicron letter in the Greek alphabet. We can keep going. We still have nine more letters in the Greek alphabet to go through. We are going to keep mutating this thing and we are going to be in pandemic hell for another few more years until we break this cycle. It is what it is.

Alderman Levasseur stated the science says the more it mutates the weaker it gets. Who has evidence that the masks work? Where is the evidence?

Mayor Craig stated we have gone through this five times.

Alderman Levasseur responded no we haven't.

Mayor Craig stated yes we just went through it when Alderman Terrio asked.

Alderman Levasseur asked where is the evidence that it works. If it worked, we wouldn't be in this mess.

Alderman Sharonov stated to be honest, I will need to see the evidence. You said it was on the CDC website but I will need to see it. I wish I had got it before the motion was made. Going back to the penalties, I think I got my answer on the fines and what happens to someone who doesn't wear a mask but since this applies to municipal buildings and city employees work here, if they refuse to wear masks will any adverse action be taken against them in terms of their job security? Yes or no.

Mayor Craig stated the last time we did this, employees and people coming into City Hall and I am sure in the other buildings complied. We didn't have any issues and I would hope that we would have the same. I am not going to speak for Alderman Stewart but I believe he is putting this in place to insure that our employees are staying safe through this. As Director Thomas said, this is a critical period of time, these next three to four weeks. We have a lot of people from the public coming into our city buildings doing business for a few minutes. If there is one more layer of protection that we can provide to our city employees, I think that is a good thing.

Alderman Sharonov stated I understand the theoretical purpose of the mask mandate, I am asking a specific question and would like a yes or no answer. If an employee refuses to wear a mask, are they going to be fired or will there be adverse action taken against them?

Mayor Craig stated I will have the Solicitor answer that.

Emily Rice, Solicitor, stated I am not aware of any city employee being penalized. As I understand the language of the resolution that was just read by the clerk, city department heads are given discretion in their own departments. I can't represent that no department head would ever take any action against any employee but I am not aware of that having occurred during the many, many months that the other resolution was in effect.

Alderman Sharonov stated that is not really a no or is it a no.

Solicitor Rice replied that is the best answer I can give alderman.

Alderman Sharonov stated it is not an answer.

Ms. Thomas stated I honestly did not come here to introduce a mask mandate. I just wanted to give you an update. I am trying to keep this simple. If you think about it in the sense of vaccination, not everyone is going to get vaccinated either and that goes for any vaccination that we do. We have been vaccinating for centuries in the Health

Department. I think what we are trying to achieve is this herd immunity number. To your point, Alderman Levasseur, about how high does that need to be, they say for some illnesses it is as high as 90% or more in order to keep it from spreading in a community. For Covid, they are saying anywhere from 80% to 90%. I do not believe we are at that point. I do believe we are more than what the numbers are showing currently but I don't believe we are at that point. So it is continuing to spread and you heard from the hospitals who is ending up in the hospitals. Even though it is a small number that are either dying from it or ending up hospitalized, they are consuming the most resources in the community. I think the goal is to achieve the majority; as many as you can. All of my employees are masking. A few people may not from time to time. I am not going to taser them to the ground. The goal is to get the majority. It is the same thing with vaccination. If we can get the majority to do it, you are upping your ante to protect the general population. That is what we are shooting for. I personally as a department head wouldn't necessarily take disciplinary action on someone. I would probably talk to them about it to understand where they are coming from. There are other hills that I need to die on and that is not going to be it for one person in a department.

Alderman Sharonov replied thank you. That is the answer I was looking for.

Alderman O'Neil stated I have a question related to the motion. Is there a timeframe on this? The Director talked about the first couple of weeks of January. Does the resolution end on a certain date?

Alderman Stewart stated we talked about revisiting it every time we meet from here on out.

Alderman O'Neil asked so right now is there a time that it ends or is it just until the Board takes further action.

Alderman Stewart answered it is open until the Board takes further action under the guidance of Director Thomas and the data that she provides. Again, as Alderman Levasseur said, we are not professional scientists and we are not medical professionals

but we do rely upon the expert staff that we have. I would listen and trust their guidance. If Director Thomas were to say hey the numbers are plateauing and starting to go down and I don't think this is necessary anymore, that would be a good indication for this Board. Then again, the Board can choose to take her advice or not.

Alderman Barry stated I may be willing to support this unless you are vaccinated. If that is added to this, I may support it but if not forget it because there is no way I am going to vote for a mandate.

Alderman Roy stated ever since I have been an alderman I haven't been pleased when questions come before us that aren't on the agenda. It is for the very reason that Alderman Sharonov. There are questions. Is there going to be any discipline? We didn't get a definitive answer. We got a legal opinion. I agree with Anna 100%. I just sit here and listen to all of the questions about how effective are masks and then someone can get them the information well you are going to be getting us the information after we have already voted and that bothers me. It always has. Maybe the smart thing to do would be to delay this vote until the new Board is here and they can have all of the information before they vote.

Alderman Levasseur asked do we have a vaccination mandate for our city employees.

Ms. Thomas answered we do not.

Alderman Levasseur stated here is the dilemma. We are demanding everybody wear a mask and I will give you that they are 60% effective but if you have employees here that are not vaccinated that don't want to get vaccinated and they are not under any obligation to do so, you are asking them to wear masks. Other people are coming in and we know there are breakthrough whatever, even with the mask on, so if you are going to demand that everybody has to wear a mask to come in here and you are really concerned about everybody's health and safety which I know you are, then you have to have every employee that we come into contact with be vaccinated. If you are going to do one you have to do both or you can't do either because they just don't make scientific sense. That is the dilemma that we have here. The thing is Anna, and I read

everything I can and I try to stay up-to-date and I ask a lot of questions...listen I have been vaccinated twice and I am waiting to get my booster in the next few days. If there is a breakthrough on me, I want it to have as little effect on my as possible. I don't want to die from this just like I don't want anyone else to die from this. We know that the vaccinations help and keep the thing down and possibly keep you out of the hospital but you have people coming in here that are not vaccinated wearing a mask. Who knows what the quality of the mask is. I have a mask and then I have the crazy one that they wear in the hospital that I can't breathe out of. Those are great and much more effective than the stupid cloth one I got from when this first began. I just say we are playing with fire here because now we have the mask on and we are coming in with the mask and then we let our guard down thinking the masks are going to be good enough for all of our employees. So either they are all going to be vaccinated and everyone is going to wear a mask or we are not going to have anyone wear a mask if people aren't going to be fully vaccinated. You can't have it both ways under the science.

Ms. Thomas replied I totally agree with you in so many different ways. The difficulty is I don't know if we can actually require a mask mandate in the city. That would be a legal question.

Alderman Levasseur stated as an employer, we could mandate that everyone has to be vaccinated.

Ms. Thomas responded right I didn't mean mask mandate, I meant vaccination mandate. It is a good question. I will just tell you that we are dealing with city employees all of the time who are not vaccinated and end up being Covid positive. I will tell you that it can be disabling for the workplace and it is also putting other employees at risk.

Alderman Levasseur asked do you think we should make that a mandate.

Ms. Thomas answered I don't know how far you can take the mandates. I honestly just want people to do it. I don't know what else to do. I have no measure of how many city employees currently are fully vaccinated. The difficulty is without knowing that 100%,

you have to do the next best thing. That is why I am saying if we don't know everyone's vaccination status and we are going to have a blend, which I know we already do and I even have it at my own department that I know of, then let's throw in another layer of protection. I look at it like is it really that big of a deal to throw on a mask when you are indoors for a short period of time or even for the city workers? For me, I don't even notice it anymore. I am just so accustomed to it. I don't know if it is that much of a burden that we are making it into. I think there is this sort of you are taking away my choice kind of piece of it and I think that is where it tugs on people. I just think you do it for a short period of time. It is not permanent. It is a short-term intervention just like anything else and I think as far as vaccination, I don't think we can mandate that in the city; I don't but I don't have that answer. It is a good question alderman.

Alderman Terrio asked Alderman Stewart would you take Alderman Barry's request as a friendly amendment.

Alderman Stewart asked could he repeat it please.

Alderman Barry stated it is that masks would be mandated unless you are vaccinated.

Ms. Thomas stated I don't know if that is what we want to practice either because there are vaccinated people who are getting Covid. It is this idea of just doing everything we can to not have it spread in the workplace. I don't know if I would subscribe to that and I don't even know how you sort that out. Are you going to ask employees to produce a vaccination card and then we are going to police the ones who are unvaccinated? That just makes it more complicated. I don't know if there is any science that backs that either with all due respect.

Mayor Craig called for a vote on the motion to approve the mask rule for all city buildings as was approved by the Board on 10/20/2020. Alderman Sharonov requested a roll call vote. Aldermen Sharonov, Levasseur, E. Sapienza, Barry, Gamache and Roy voted nay. Aldermen O'Neil, Terrio, Cavanaugh, Stewart, Long and T. Sapienza voted yea. The Mayor broke the tie and voted yea. The motion carried.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked do you have any guidance on treatment for COVID-19 beyond check the website.

Ms. Thomas answered I am not a practitioner so I can't prescribe something for you. I can only go to that evidence. I am not a treatment provider. That is something that your physician would be having a conversation with you on if, in fact, you were Covid positive and depending on all of your co-morbidities there are different treatment modalities for every single person. We are in the business of prevention so I am not on the end of treatment but like I said, there is a place where all of that information is being updated continuously as far as what treatment is available for Covid.

Alderman Long stated with respect to the testing at Hunt Pool, what are we seeing for numbers of people.

Ms. Thomas responded that is another thing that I can provide for you. The state supplies us with that information on a weekly basis so I can give you the numbers. It is a pretty good uptick. It is a pretty busy place most of the day. I think people are taking advantage of it, which is great, especially with the holidays.

Alderman Long asked and it is a two-day turnaround as I understand it.

Ms. Thomas answered it depends on the day. Some days it is a little bit longer and some days it is shorter. I think it varies. We try to tell everyone it is about 48 hours on average. They will tell you the day you are getting testing. They will know the backlog and if it is going to take a little bit longer.

Alderman Levasseur asked do we have to wear facemasks now.

City Clerk Normand stated the motion passed so it would be effective right now.

CONSENT AGENDA

Accept BMA Minutes

1. Minutes from the July 6, 2021 Public Participation, BMA and Finance meetings and the four July 20, 2021 Special BMA meetings.

REFERRALS TO COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

2. "Amending the FY2022 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Two Hundred Thirty Eight Thousand Eight Hundred Dollars (\$238,800) for the FY2022 CIP 412122 2021 Homeland Security Grant Program-Network Hardening."

"Amending the FY2022 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$250,000) for the FY2022 CIP 611122 Helping Hands - 140-142 Central Street Renovation Project."

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

3. Recommending that the summary of abatement requests submitted by Fred McNeill, Chief Engineer, be approved.
(*Unanimous vote*)
4. Recommending that the amending resolution and budget authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$238,800 for CIP 412122 2021 Homeland Security Grant Program – Network Hardening, be approved.
(*Unanimous vote*)
5. Recommending that the amending resolution and budget authorizations providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$250,000 for CIP 611122 Helping Hands – 140-142 Central Street Renovation Project, be approved.
(*Unanimous vote*)
6. Recommending that the request from the Planning & Community Development Director to extend various CIP projects be approved.
(*Unanimous vote*)
7. Recommending that the communication from the property owner of 385 – 387 Belmont Street requesting subordination of a City lien related to funds from the Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Demonstration Grant, be approved.

The committee notes that the property owner is no longer requesting a cash-out refinancing.
(*Unanimous vote*)

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES/INSURANCE

8. Recommending that the request from the Public Works Director to reclassify the Assistant Solid Waste Compliance Officer from a Grade 12 to a Grade 14 be approved.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Hirschmann who was absent)
9. Recommending that the request from the Public Works Director to amend the class specification of the Scale Operator position (Grade 14) to allow for a six-month period upon hiring to obtain requisite certifications and licenses be approved.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Hirschmann who was absent)
10. Advising that the communication from Alderman Roy recommending the hiring of an independent firm to evaluate the Manchester Fire Department has been received and filed.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Hirschmann who was absent)

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, HEALTH AND TRAFFIC

11. Recommending that the following traffic regulations be approved:
NO PARKING ANYTIME
On Brockton Street, south side, from Bismark Street to Brock Street
On Cleveland Street, north side, from Second Street to Third Street
Alderman Barry
RESCIND 30 MINUTE PARKING
On Cleveland Street, north side, from Second Street to Third Street (ORD 2851)
Alderman Barry

NO PARKING, 7 AM-9 AM AND 2 PM TO 4 PM, SCHOOL DAYS
On Michigan Avenue, west side, from Hanover Street to Briar Avenue
Alderman Roy
RESCIND NO PARKING DURING SCHOOLS HOURS
On Michigan Avenue, west side, from Hanover Street to a point 90 feet north (ORD 3399)
Alderman Roy
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Gamache who was absent)
12. Recommending that the communication from Total Image Running for permission to use Arms Park for their TI 10 Miler/10K on Saturday, May 7, 2022 be approved.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Gamache who was absent)
13. Recommending that the pilot street sweeping program presented by the Department of Public Works be approved.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Gamache who was absent)

*HAVING READ THE CONSENT AGENDA, ON MOTION OF **ALDERMEN O'NEIL**,
DULY SECONDED BY **ALDERMAN LONG**, THE CONSENT AGENDA WAS
APPROVED.*

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, HEALTH AND TRAFFIC

- 14.** Advising that they received and filed the request from Alderman Sharonov to waive police detail fees for a holiday neighborhood party taking place on December 12, 2021 on Holt Avenue.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Gamache who was absent)

Alderman Sharonov moved to waive the police detail fee for the holiday neighborhood party that took place on Holt Avenue. At that party, they raised \$550 for Station 8, collected 350 coats, 75 blankets, 15 sleeping bags, 69 pairs of socks plus gloves and hats, as well as over 200 toys for Toys for Tots. The number for the police detail was \$254.

Alderman Terrio duly seconded the motion.

Alderman O'Neil asked does this mean we are going to waive the fee for the St. Patrick's Day Parade which is usually \$6,000 or \$7,000. Is that where we are headed with all of this now? Alderman Sharonov are you going to support waiving \$6,000 or \$7,000 in police detail fees?

Alderman Sharonov stated a police detail is required for a full parade. This was just a holiday block party that only required one officer, well it didn't really require a police detail to begin with in my opinion because a similar party took place in the summer and there were no problems.

Alderman O'Neil asked who required the police detail, the police.

Alderman Sharonov answered yes for the holiday party.

Alderman O'Neil stated well they also require details for parades so if you support this you are going to support waiving the fees for a lot of other things in this city. I am sure the Police Chief would love to pick up the \$7,000 police detail fee for the parade.

Mayor Craig called for a vote. The motion failed on a voice vote.

REGULAR BUSINESS

- 15.** Communication from Richard Tango-Lowy advising the Board of his resignation from the Central Business Service District Advisory Committee effective 12/7/2021.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Cavanaugh**, it was voted to accept the resignation with regret.*

- 16.** Nomination(s) to be submitted by Mayor Craig, if available.

Mayor Craig stated pursuant to Section 3.14(b) of the City Charter, please find below the following nominations which will layover to the next BMA meeting.

Trustees of the Trust Funds

Lyn Gelinas as a regular member, term to expire January 1, 2025

Planning Board

Molly Lunn Owen moving from an alternate to a regular member, term to expire May 1, 2022

Stefan Philbrook as an alternate member, term to expire May 1, 2024

Conduct Board

Roland Martin as a regular member, term to expire October 1, 2024

Water Commission

Judy Reardon as a regular member, term to expire January 1, 2025

Harold Sullivan as a regular member, term to expire January 1, 2025

OYS Advisory Board

Madhab Gurung as a regular member, term to expire January 1, 2025

Alderman T. Sapienza moved to nominate Jason Bonilla for the vacant Ward 5 School Board seat. He is a resident who lives on Central Street. He recently became a homeowner. He is proud and happy to be in Ward 5 and willing to serve. He is a young man who brings a fresh perspective and he is very qualified. **Alderman Barry** duly seconded the nomination.

Mayor Craig stated by policy this nomination will layover for two weeks.

Alderman Roy stated I just want to say that I think this is a little disjointed. I think that the Board that nominates and then confirms should be the same. The membership of this Board is going to change in 11 days. I don't disagree with what Alderman T. Sapienza is saying and I typically support whatever the aldermen did in these cases but I think this is disjointed and it would have been better if this nominate was made when the next Board was seated. Even though they will have some input, I think it would have been a lot cleaner.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated we have an unfortunate situation that we were dealt so we are taking care of it as cleanly as we can. There is no harm in making the nomination now. The new Board members know who they are and they are already fully engaged. They have come to a couple of meetings already. This is no secret. I was in the newspaper and is in the agenda packet. People want to make a mountain out of a mole hill but that is all that is going on here. At the last meeting we had a big discussion about whether we should follow the charter or not. Let's move on and get this seat filled as fast as we can and let the school board do their work.

Alderman Terrio stated I sent an email to Alderman T. Sapienza and Emily Rice but I never heard back. I just want to clarify something because it is kind of a gray area. An employee cannot be an alderman or school board member. Mr. Bonilla is a member of City Year and this is why it is vague or kind of gray. City Year works within the school district and paid by the school district. I just want to make sure that that doesn't disqualify him from being a school board member.

Solicitor Rice asked so your question is whether or not as an employee of City Year he is an employee of the school board.

Alderman Terrio responded I am asking if he is eligible to hold office.

Solicitor Rice replied I don't think he is an employee of the school board or school district rather.

Alderman Terrio stated the school district pays City Year to provide services.

Mayor Craig stated they only pay a small portion of the total amount.

Alderman Terrio responded but they work within the school district.

Solicitor Rice stated I don't know what the precise financial arrangement is. My understanding, to the extent that I have one, is that City Year is a vendor and has a contract with the school district as do many other entities. He may be an employee of a vendor but he is not an employee of the Manchester school district as far as I know.

Alderman Terrio asked so I would assume that would preclude him from voting on any contract with City Year.

Solicitor Rice answered I am not going to give an opinion on conflicts of interest on the school board. I just can't respectfully. They are not my client.

Alderman Sharonov stated I don't think I got the resume for the nominee so I would appreciate it if it could be forwarded to me.

Alderman Levasseur stated it wasn't on the agenda so I don't think anybody got it.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated I sent out his resume to some people.

Alderman Levasseur responded we didn't get it then.

Alderman T. Sapienza replied I didn't send it to every alderman. I sent it to the people who I thought were going to support the motion.

Mayor Craig asked can you please get the resume to the Clerk so they can send it out to everyone.

Alderman T. Sapienza answered sure.

Alderman Levasseur stated well you don't think very smartly about your colleagues and whether they are going to support him or not. Nobody said they weren't going to support him.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated I didn't send it to you because I don't care which way you vote.

- 17.** Nomination to be presented by Alderman Cavanaugh for Marlana Trombley to be a member of the Manchester Transit Authority Commission, term to expire May 1, 2024.
(Note: Pursuant to Rule 20 of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, this nomination will layover to the next meeting of the Board.)

*On motion of **Alderman Cavanaugh**, duly seconded by **Alderman Stewart**, it was voted to confirm the nomination as presented.*

- 18.** Tentative Agreement between the City and the United Steel Workers, Local 8938.

***Alderman O'Neil** moved to ratify the agreement. **Alderman Long** duly seconded the motion. Mayor Craig called for a vote. The motion carried with Aldermen T. Sapienza and E. Sapienza abstaining.*

- 19.** Tentative Agreement between the City and the Manchester Association of Fire Supervisors.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Roy**, it was voted to ratify the agreement.*

Alderman E. Sapienza asked has the information in this agreement been made public or is it confidential.

City Clerk Normand stated it is on your agenda so it is public.

- 20.** Communication from Leon LaFreniere, Planning & Community Development Director, requesting authorization to enter into a contract in the amount of \$75,000 for the demolition of the structure at 416 Central Street.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman T. Sapienza**, it was voted to approve the request.*

- 21.** Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000) for the FY2022 CIP 811722 Southern NH Build Back Better Regional Challenge.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Cavanaugh**, it was voted to refer the Resolution and Budget Authorization to the Committee on Finance.*

Alderman Levasseur asked this is a grant right.

Mayor Craig answered yes. We are setting up a CIP account to accept the \$500,000 grant and there is no match.

- 22.** Budget projections to be submitted by Sharon Wickens, Finance Officer, if available.

Sharon Wickens, Finance Officer, stated it appears that the projections I am putting forward tonight, while there is still a surplus at this point in time, it is \$80,000 less than what is on your letter. The surplus is \$464,000. That is because \$80,000 was approved by the BMA to be transferred out of contingency for one of the firefighter contracts. The expenditure surplus of \$974,000 remains the same. The revenue deficit of \$2,230,000 also remains the same as well as the use of the \$1,630,000 in ARPA aid. The number that does change is the contingency account. In this letter it shows \$420,000. Once that transfer is recorded, it will be \$340,000. Going back to the deficit, it is the same issues that we have been talking about every month – interest income, parking which has not come back as well as vehicle registrations. Those are still down even after we pulled the revenue down. It is down just shy of \$500,000. We also are showing that health insurance is currently performing about 2% above plan. The provider, USI, seemed to feel that it would stay even with last year but it has crept up a little bit. I don't know if it is related to Covid or what is happening there. I think we just need to watch it a little bit more. There were 20 retirements through December 17

compared to 17 at the same time a year ago. The severance paid thus far amounts to \$702,906 compared to \$706,570 a year ago. It is pretty flat. The severance reserve account currently has a balance...geez that number is wrong too. It currently has a balance of \$1,160,980.89. Are there any questions?

Alderman Levasseur stated you said that the revenue deficit is \$2,230,000 correct.

Ms. Wickens responded yes and if you look at it, the majority is Finance which is \$1,630,000. That is interest income and also parking is down. The ARPA aid will pick up all of what we are short on that.

Alderman Levasseur stated well it says here that the use of the \$1.630 million in ARPA revenue replacement funds. If you took that number out of there you would only have about a \$600,000 revenue shortfall? It says the operating surplus is comprised of an expenditure surplus of \$974,000 and a revenue deficit of \$2,230,000 and the use of \$1.6 million. Can you put that all together and break that down into a formula instead of a...I am not good with word math. I am good with a calculator.

Ms. Wickens stated if you look at the second page you will see it there.

Alderman Levasseur stated I thought that was the money that as for vehicle registrations. What is the registration deficit?

Ms. Wickens responded right now we are projecting it to be \$444,000.

Alderman Levasseur asked so you are projecting that out until June 30.

Ms. Wickens answered right. We are hoping it gets better but we are not sure.

Alderman Levasseur stated that helps me a little bit. On the \$2,230,000, you said you have it broken out. Where is that?

Ms. Wickens replied it is under revenues; that whole column.

Alderman Levasseur asked so where is the \$1.6 million.

Mayor Craig answered it is under Finance. It is the third number down.

Alderman Levasseur asked but what is that.

Mayor Craig responded interest income and parking revenues were down.

Alderman Levasseur asked interest.

Ms. Wickens replied interest income. Normally when the interest rates are a little bit higher, we invest any excess funds that we have. Right now we are getting about five basis points. In FY19 we had \$1.3 million in interest income. This year, we will be lucky to make \$150,000 unless interest rates go up.

Alderman Levasseur stated I bring this point up because I am looking ahead to the June budget a little early maybe. That \$1.6 million, does that count as a loss of revenue that allows you to tap into the rainy day fund or is this a different type of revenue?

Ms. Wickens answered this would be covered by ARPA funds.

Alderman Levasseur asked so it is not for the revenue we would be short in the other departments.

Mayor Craig stated you are covering it.

Ms. Wickens stated we are covering it through ARPA funds. What ARPA fund guidelines say is whatever you earned in FY19 we will bring you back to that level. So if you had revenues over what you collected in FY19 obviously...

Alderman Levasseur interjected even on interest income.

Ms. Wickens replied that is correct. We made \$1.3 million in FY19 so the ARPA funds will kick in about \$900,000 because we are short and it is because Covid impacted the economy.

Alderman Levasseur asked so that is not a real projected revenue number loss then. It is going to be a lot lower right?

Mayor Craig answered this is what is projected and she is showing you how it is going to be covered.

Ms. Wickens stated this is our best guess when we close the books on June 30 based on what we know now.

Alderman Levasseur asked so it is \$644,000.

Ms. Wickens responded it is \$544,000 but you need to take \$80,000 out because if you recall at the last BMA meeting it was approved to move \$80,000 out of contingency.

Alderman Levasseur asked do you see any potential to make any of that money up. Does Brenda want to give us some good news yet or is she waiting?

Ms. Wickens answered the department heads are really watching their budgets. They are having a hard time hiring so there may be some expenditure surplus as we start to get into February and March. That is when they start throwing it back. They are doing everything they can to hire people right now so they don't have a really good feeling of what that surplus would be but I would expect it will get better as we move through the year. There are no other wrenches and we don't need any other wrenches in our wheel.

Alderman Levasseur asked are we going to get to the total of the amount allocated for retirements or are we going to be a little lower.

Ms. Wickens replied as far as the severance cost, I think we will meet budget. I don't think there will be much of a difference.

Alderman Roy stated is the date May 7 on the letter a mistake.

Ms. Wickens responded yes that whole thing needs to come right out of there. That whole severance reserve account balance should come right out.

Alderman Roy stated so the severance reserve account is \$1,161,000.

Ms. Wickens stated \$1,161,200 is the balance in the severance reserve today.

Alderman Long stated with respect to the health insurance, did we see a reduction in the last budget. Was there a reduction in our health insurance or did it remain even? I don't recall it being increased.

Ms. Wickens responded we left the health insurance flat in the budget. I will say that you are about two months behind the actual cost. In the last two months of the year, we did go over budget a little bit.

Alderman Long asked so this 2% increase is an actual number.

Ms. Wickens answered it is the plan number. It is not the budget it is where we ended the year last year, which was maybe about \$400,000 or \$500,000 higher.

*On motion of **Alderman Roy**, duly seconded by **Alderman Cavanaugh**, it was voted to recess the meeting to allow the Committee on Finance to meet.*

Mayor Craig called the meeting back to order.

25. Report(s) of the Committee on Finance, if available.

The Committee on Finance respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that Resolutions:

"Amending the FY2022 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Two Hundred Thirty Eight Thousand Eight Hundred Dollars (\$238,800) for the FY2022 CIP 412122 2021 Homeland Security Grant Program-Network Hardening."

"Amending the FY2022 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$250,000) for the FY2022 CIP 611122 Helping Hands - 140-142 Central Street Renovation Project."

"Amending the FY2022 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000) for the FY2022 CIP 811722 Southern NH Build Back Better Regional Challenge."

ought to pass and be Enrolled.

*On motion of **Alderman Stewart**, duly seconded by **Alderman Long**, it was voted to accept the report and adopt its recommendation.*

26. Report(s) of the Committee on Bills on Second Reading, if available.

The Committee on Bills on Second Reading respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that Ordinance amendment:

"Amending Section 12 City Ward Lines by revising the descriptions to create wards of equal population as practicable."

be approved with the amended boundary lines in Wards 2 and 6.

Alderman Stewart moved to accept the report and adopt its recommendation.

Alderman Cavanaugh duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Terrio stated I know that Alderman Shaw had requested a change. What was the outcome of that and why?

Alderman T. Sapienza stated it wasn't approved at the committee level. If you remember, when this was first rolled out we all agreed to go with the original plan and

then we had one person who had an issue with four houses, an elected official. So we took care of that elected official and left the rest the way we originally agreed when this was first rolled out.

Mayor Craig called for a vote. *There being none opposed, the motion carried.*

City Clerk Normand stated if the Board is so inclined to Ordain that amendment this evening, you could have a motion to suspend the rules, place the ordinance on its third and final reading and ordain.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Roy**, it was voted to suspend the rules, place the ordinance on its third and final reading and ordain.*

27. Report(s) of the Committee on Administration/Information Systems.

There were no reports.

28. Report(s) of the Committee on Lands & Buildings, if available.

The Committee on Lands & Buildings respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that a request from CMC for a utility easement for a fire protection loop to be installed under the sidewalk on Wayne Street be approved.

Alderman Cavanaugh moved to accept the report and adopt its recommendation.

Alderman Levasseur duly seconded the motion. *Mayor Craig called for a vote. The motion carried with Alderman Terrio abstaining.*

29. Resolutions:

"Amending the FY2022 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Two Hundred Thirty Eight Thousand Eight Hundred Dollars (\$238,800) for the FY2022 CIP 412122 2021 Homeland Security Grant Program-Network Hardening."

"Amending the FY2022 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$250,000) for the FY2022 CIP 611122 Helping Hands - 140-142 Central Street Renovation Project."

"Amending the FY2022 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000) for the FY2022 CIP 811722 Southern NH Build Back Better Regional Challenge."

*On motion of **Alderman Roy**, duly seconded by **Alderman Cavanaugh**, it was voted to waive the reading by titles only.*

*On motion of **Alderman T. Sapienza**, duly seconded by **Alderman Long**, it was voted that the Resolutions be Enrolled.*

30. Bond Resolution:

"Authorizing Bonds, Notes or Lease Purchases in the amount of One Hundred Twenty Four Thousand One Hundred Sixty One Dollars (\$124,161) for the 2022 CIP 411022 Assistance to Firefighters Grant-SCBA."

*On motion of **Alderman Cavanaugh**, duly seconded by **Alderman T. Sapienza**, it was voted to waive the reading by title only.*

*On motion of **Alderman T. Sapienza**, duly seconded by **Alderman Long**, it was voted that the Bond Resolution be Enrolled.*

31. Ordinances:

"Amending Section 33.025 & 33.026 (Assistant Solid Waste Compliance Officer) of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester."

"Amending Section 33.026 (Scale Operator) of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester."

*On motion of **Alderman Stewart**, duly seconded by **Alderman Roy**, it was voted to waive the reading by titles only.*

*On motion of **Alderman O'Neil**, duly seconded by **Alderman Barry**, it was voted that the Ordinances be Ordained.*

NEW BUSINESS

Alderman Barry stated I want to thank Aldermen Roy, O'Neil, Terrio and Hirschmann who is not here tonight for their years of service. There is a lot of work that has to be done as an alderman. I appreciate all of you and I have learned a lot from each and every one of you. I certainly appreciate your service because it is a lot of work. Dan was one of my best friends and he has been here for so long and done so much for the city as everyone has. Thank you guys.

Mayor Craig stated I, too, would like to say a few things. Aldermen Terrio, Roy, Hirschmann and O'Neil, while you all have different backgrounds and come from different places, each of you has helped to shape our city even before you sat in these chambers so I thank you for that. I am sure we will continue to see the work that you are doing throughout our city and look forward to that. You will all be receiving a key to the city thanks to the Clerk's Office who organized that. They are inscribed with the following "In appreciation for your years of service on behalf of the citizens of Manchester" so we thank you. I think it is important to note that these four aldermen combined have 56 years of service to the City of Manchester. Ross with two years. He brought a great connection to the Board of School Committee with his work over there. I want to thank you for your advocacy and volunteering to insure that the residents of Manchester were vaccinated. You went above and beyond your role as an alderman in doing that so thank you. Alderman Roy has 10 years here in the seat in addition to his many years on the Fire Department. He has a long history of service to our community and I know he will continue to work on our behalf on the Zoning Board for a number of years. I want to thank you for putting up with my constantly calling you Alderman Long. You always came to these meetings extremely organized so thank you. While Alderman Hirschmann is not here, he served the city for 14 years as an alderman and served as a moderator in his ward. He is known, when you talk to folks in Ward 12, for his constituent service. He really took care of the residents there and we wish him the best in his new home. Alderman O'Neil has 30 years of service as an alderman in addition to being a selectman, a moderator and a state senator. You are the second longest serving alderman in the City of Manchester, second only to Alderman Bill Cashin. We all do just want to thank you for all that you have done for the City of Manchester and responding to constituents and working with city departments and always saying thank you to city workers and looking out for the little guy. We appreciate

all that you have done. Collectively, I think we want to thank you all for your service to the City of Manchester.

Alderman Terrio stated I have two things. We heard today from homeless advocates about leaving the homeless people alone but we also had a fire in an RV where somebody was killed so we have a dangerous situation. I don't know if you folks remember but a few months ago we allocated money for the police to take care of people living in campers and RV's. Obviously I am going to be gone after this but we need to balance between...I understand there are homeless people living in campers and trailers and they need a place to stay but we also have dangerous situations where we have allocated money to tow these vehicles away. I guess we have to look at it on a case-by-case basis. We have safety situations where not only are the people in the campers unsafe but the people around them are unsafe also. I think we are going to have to start looking at that. The second thing is I wanted...Schonna Green has been accused and she is here and I assume she wants to address the fact that she has been accused of stating publically that she told people, and this has been repeated multiple times, not to feed the homeless. I saw her shaking her head and I would like to give her the change to rebut that because I don't think she said that. If we could indulge Schonna and have her come up, I know she was very upset and it has been repeated multiple times. I don't think she said that.

Schonna Green, Director of Homelessness Initiatives, stated as it relates to that comment it is a snippet. It is not the whole entire comment. What I resolved myself to doing is allow it and keep sticking and moving. I know what is being done for our city and I know what units are coming. I know the surprises that we have that I can't talk about yet. We are going to address the affordable housing for 10%, 20%, 30%, 40% and 50% of area median income and that developer is coming in and donating to the affordable housing trust. We are working on that. We are also working with the new HOPE outreach initiative which has been meeting. We have met three times so far. We have a total of 17 participants and that includes stakeholders and local citizens. We are putting together the first ever HOPE Distribution Center. We will be standing that up starting on 12/28 and that gives back to the community but it gives back to the community in a way that I talked about regarding centralizing services. If we can bring

people in, we can assess what their needs are and get them to the right organizations. The HOPE Outreach Committee will also support all of the non-profit organizations that are out there with their boots on the ground. The feeding issue that is coming out is because I feel deep down inside that we need to encourage people to come out of the woods. So we need to bring the food this way and we need to bring the hygiene and pantries this way. We need to bring them into our world so that we can better get them into the organizations that can provide the services that are needed. That is something that we are working on. As it relates to sweeping of the encampments, I don't think any of us like to sweep the encampments, however, I represent the city now and I have to look at both sides. People that live here and pay taxes here have a right to be safe in their backyards. We all agree with that. One of the things that we have to do is if it is unsafe with the Fire and Police Departments and all of the lovely staff that I have, we go out and we try to effect change and we do that in a way that is safe to the camper and then we literally try to find that camper housing. Currently we are doing away with a structure that has been in the woods for over four years but the couple that live in that structure were on the street with me today. The couple that lived in that structure, I walked through their new housing and the couple that lived in that structure will be receiving support from our Welfare Department. We are doing everything that we can. It is just not happening fast enough for the public to understand it and see it. In addition to that, we did bring in the Gatehouse initiative. From September 16 through December 1, we were able to place 29 people in respite there. We had two come back. So it is a start and we are going to keep snipping as we go. It is one step at a time. Never, ever, would I begrudge anybody a meal. That is one and two for those that haven't done all of their history on me they need to know that we started the first public feed event in Florida that fed thousands for free with businesses. It has been in operation for 21 years. I just have to allow certain things to roll off my back and stay focused. The Chief that is sitting behind me does a good job of keeping me focused. The proof is in the pudding and it is coming.

Alderman O'Neil stated Schonna and I didn't have a chance to talk today but I left a message for her. This whole issue of affordable workforce housing...I called her today on an issue that I just became aware of. It is not homeless but this could lead to homelessness. It is somebody who has a full-time job at a bank and they have an adult

son and both she and her adult son live with a gentleman and help pay rent but for some reason the relationship has ended and she can't afford a two-bedroom apartment in the city. She has a steady job.

Ms. Green responded we spoke about this in August when I came up and gave my little report. When we look at affordable housing, we are looking at the service industry like the people that work at Walmart and the bank tellers. They are struggling. They are one paycheck away from homelessness. One incident and they are falling into the homeless rolls. However, with the affordable housing initiatives that we put forth, the ones that have supported the non-profits already and then the ones that we are working with for profit and non-profit developers on to get them to participate in this, this has to happen. Unfortunately, it is just not fast enough but the units that are coming up, I think there will be over 300 units that are going to be built that are targeting affordable housing only. The biggest hole that I continue to see is permanent supportive housing for people that have extreme needs. One of the things when you see me jumping out of the chair and one of the things that I speak to the Chief about all the time is I am going in and out of a lot of these housing units here in the city and they look beautiful on the outside but they are a mess on the inside. I think that we need to come up with initiatives that support the for profit and non-profit developers that are willing to provide affordable housing and allow them to fix these dwellings because the dwellings are miserable on the inside. I have been working with two private landlords that are willing to support the city and I am going to come and ask for money because when I walk on their floors I feel like I am going to fall through.

Mayor Craig stated we did allocate ARPA funds exactly for that. As long as the landlord is going to keep the unit affordable, they can receive funding.

Ms. Green stated those are the things we are working on. It is one step at a time and it will come.

Alderman O'Neil stated in my call to Schonna today, it reminded me that this affordable discussion goes from here to here. It is not a small window we are talking about. It is a very broad window, this definition of affordable.

Ms. Green responded it is a broad window but I can say this. Based on the initiatives we did with the \$4.7 million and now the additional funds that are available, I know that we have over 300 units that are going to be developed and targeted specifically for affordable housing and that is from 10% to 60% or 70% of area median income. I think that is huge. It is just that we can't build them fast enough. They are coming. There are other things we can do that I know we are not doing and I know that I spoke with Alderman Long about this and that is to require for profit developers to add 5% or 10% of affordable units to their new dwellings and if they don't want to add those units we should ask them to support the Affordable Housing Trust in the form of some type of contribution so that the people willing to look at the affordable housing issues continue to have funding to support it. Those are the two biggest things that most states and cities and counties are doing. That is basically it. I think it is extremely important and I believe I spoke with Alderman Levasseur before and explained that with the rent being charged for a two-bedroom apartment right now, you could buy a condo with a 30 year fixed mortgage at simple interest with tax and insurance included for \$1,200 a month. That is just a quick synopsis. We continue to work with new organizations that we will be introducing as well that are going to be targeting special needs housing in our city.

Alderman Levasseur stated as far as water running of a duck's back, you heard what these people came in and accused the mayor of to her face and the aldermen and everybody else using words like murders and saying we are responsible for people's deaths. You have to sit in this seat and anybody can come in and say whatever they please and we are supposed to just sit there. We know the public is smart enough to know that this is just beyond ridiculous but it still doesn't feel good to be called these types of names and to have things said about you that are not true. You really don't have any venue to defend yourself. My concern has been, from the beginning of this whole situation that has really festered and gotten out of control, that yes we should help and do what we can but let's say we got 150 homeless people an apartment tomorrow. The word spreads all over the country right? I see these guys on their phones and on Facebook. I have been sent messages on Facebook that were nasty from some of the people that were here tonight. They tell each other everything. So then we have another crop of 150 come and the mayor is on her third term and I have

been sitting on this board for a lot of terms and I have seen a whole new crew of people coming in here. They aren't the people who were here when we first got into this mess. Are we just supposed to keep giving people free housing forever?

Ms. Green responded that is not the answer. We all know that in order for somebody to be successful they must have skin in the game. We have to create programs that allow them to be fully participatory in the process but also allow them to participate in their overall success. I think it is important that we reach down and lift people up but once we lift people up, it has to be the goal to bring them to the point of self-sufficiency. I think that is really important. Just to give you a general idea, when you look at supportive housing, maybe you are not charging \$1,000 rent but maybe you are charging \$700 or \$500. Rent should be charged because that is the process. This thing where everybody just assumes that...housing is a right but you also have the right to compete for your success in this United States of America. I do not believe that we should just continue to give, give and give. There has to be an exchange otherwise you can grow a population that you don't want to have here.

Alderman Levasseur asked are there any standards as far as somebody who has been...I see a few homeless people that have been here for six years or eight years and I know them because they grew up here or lived in Manchester and have had jobs here. Are there any priorities for them or is there a seniority way of going about this or if you come from New York tomorrow and get off the bus you are the first person that gets in line? Is there a priority system at all?

Ms. Green answered with most of your housing agencies, it is all based on need. It is need and availability. Right now I don't even think we are at that level of where we can say we have more than enough housing and more than enough support services and we can put people in line. It is based on extreme need first for most organizations.

Alderman Levasseur asked do you see an end in sight.

Ms. Green replied I think the end in sight for our city here is to build affordable housing for all income streams. Once we do that, this person that is making \$20,000 with 10%

of their available income and this person that is making \$80,000 with 30-35% of their available income and I think we need to really mix the communities so that we give lower income people an opportunity to aspire to have something different in life and not create ghettos.

Mayor Craig stated thank you for all you are doing and if I can just add to your last comment, I think what you said is right on but we need to make sure that the state overall is doing the same thing. Manchester, again, can't be the one that is providing all of the housing at every income level. We have a plan and you are implementing this plan and forging new relationships and really opening up great opportunities for individuals in the City of Manchester but at the same time we need the state or other communities to do the same thing.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated as has been mentioned in previous meetings, when we talk about the cost of housing in Manchester I think we should realize that Manchester is actually cheaper than the surrounding communities.

Ms. Green replied it is.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated just for the sake of accuracy I wanted to say that. I know you have kind of touched upon this but when we talk about affordable housing and you mentioned 10% and 20%, etc., briefly what exactly is happening? The private property owner is going to be receiving less money or are they going to be receiving the same exact money and the city or state or federal funds will make up for it?

Ms. Green answered what it really is is a combination of two things. You can offer most affordable if the developer leverages the funding to build and/or acquire the property such as the grant opportunities that we are utilizing and then we put lien positions on those properties to remain an affordability for 10-20 years. Those doors are open for for profits as well. The big for profit that is coming through is going to be using the state tax credit program. Many of your for profits prefer to not have regulation over them from the government so they choose to do what they want and that is a private landlord and we don't have the authority to tell them what they can charge. When we look at developing

properties and I talk about affordability and I talk about mixed use, you may have 10% that are at 30% of area median income and you may have another 30% that are at 40% or 50% of area median income. The goal is to make sure that the multi-family housing complex survives. One of the things that we have to take out of it is greed. When we take greed out of it, everybody eats and everybody has housing. We have to encourage more development from non-profits that have the build capacity to create the housing stock that we need and then we have to continue to build relationships with for profit developers that are willing to come to our city and build affordable housing utilizing the subsidies that are available to keep the debt ratio low. Did that help?

Alderman E. Sapienza responded yes.

Alderman Long stated with respect to the people that came in and spoke, they are living with people that are dying. I see their passion and I get that. I don't let it stick on me. They can say whatever they want about me but I know that they are living with the people that are dying and they are emotional. They just had a memorial tonight so that pumped them up. They are members of the public and I encourage them to come and speak. I have talked to them about putting everything on the city and that is just not the case. I heard we add money to the police budget and reduce the shelter budget. In the last budget, we gave FIT \$65,000. That is just not the case. It is a state initiative with shelters. Pointing them in the right direction is what we try to do.

Ms. Green stated one of the other big things that I think we need to talk about somehow is when you look at the FIT organization, especially their emergency shelter, many of the people that are there need permanent supportive housing. They are not going to be your standard landlord/tenant situation. When you look and say it is a bottleneck, it is going to take time because they have to continue to either create the housing that is required for that population or we are going to have to build permanent supportive housing with those features in place. There is a large spectrum of housing that we need but we are doing a good job and I am really excited about it. It is just going to take a little time for the public to see it.

Alderman Long stated I want to give a commendation to Director Sheppard. I was blown away when I read the article about the ManchesterConnect app and how they are responding to people that notify them of potholes and other things. They are out the next day on a lot of these things fixing them. There is something that is working and thank you Kevin for showing the public that respect.

Alderman Levasseur stated I want to say Merry Christmas to everybody on this Board and all of the city staff and employees and Happy New Year. We will see you on January 4.

Mayor Craig stated I want to welcome back Chief Aldenberg. He graduated from the FBI Academy on December 6. Congratulations and it is good to have you back. I would like to thank Assistant Chief Mangone. In your absence, he did a fantastic job. I, too, want to wish everybody a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays and Happy New Year. This has been another difficult year because of Covid and with the department heads here in person, I want to thank you for all that you and your employees have done. You have done tremendous work this year and really every year and we appreciate all that you are doing. I also want to thank our generous residents. They continue to come forward and address the needs of our community, especially during the holiday season. As Alderman Sharonov mentioned, Mr. Mowery held a block party and raised funds. The Lawrence family has the Tower of Toys. Matt Courchesne does the Hope Program Miracle on Elm Street. We have the Manchester Professional Firefighters Association, Local 856, with Operation Warm and then of course the Salvation Army. There are many, many others.

Alderman O'Neil stated the Ancient Order of Hibernians.

Mayor Craig stated yes. Our residents and the people and businesses in this community are what makes Manchester so special so I wanted to thank them for that.

Alderman O'Neil stated first and foremost, I want to thank the people of Manchester who allowed me to serve them as an alderman for the last 24 years and combined for 30 years. I want to thank the two most important women in my life, my late mother Joanne

who put up with me living at home during my earliest years in elective office and my wife, Karen, who has put up with me for the past 23 years in my efforts to serve the people of Manchester. I want to thank the seven mayors of our city that I worked with, including Mayor Craig. I had to check that to make sure it was right. I have served with seven mayors. I want to thank all of the aldermen past and present that I have served with; too many to single out but yes you Alderman Levasseur. I want to thank my political mentors from my earliest days in elective office – the great Bill Cashin who we see very time we come in here, Alderman Pete Burkush, Alderman Ray Provencher and former Alderman Bill Kelly who helped me get started in politics back in the day at our neighborhood corner store, Lincoln Fruit. This one is going to be the toughest one for me but last but certainly not least our great city employees that I have served with over the years. I apologize that there might be some grammatical errors because my speech writer wasn't available this afternoon. From entry level folks to department heads, past and present, many that I have grown up with in city government. I have been honored to work with you in our efforts to make a difference in the lives of the people of Manchester. The citizens of Manchester are lucky to have had and have currently a group of very dedicated people serving them each day. I raise my glass to all of you. Thank you for your service to the people of Manchester. Thank you and Merry Christmas to you and your families.

TABLED ITEMS

*On motion of **Alderman Levasseur**, duly seconded by **Alderman Roy**, it was voted to remove the item from the table.*

- 33.** Advising that the request from the property owners of 426 E. High Street requesting subordination of a city lien in the amount of \$20,000 was received and filed.
(Aldermen T. Sapienza, Roy and E. Sapienza voted yea, Alderman Cavanaugh voted nay, and Alderman O'Neil was absent.)
(Note: Tabled at the 10/19/21 BMA meeting for further information from property owners which was sent under separate cover.)

Alderman Cavanaugh stated I would like to leave this on the table because we did get some information and Todd did reach out to the homeowners and they supplied the paperwork we asked for.

Mayor Craig responded the information is on the agenda.

Alderman Roy stated this was in committee and denied in committee. Alderman Cavanaugh took it off and asked to put it on the table. I am still going to vote against it because they are trying to take money out and we don't do that. That was the issue in committee. You can do what you want but *I move to receive and file*.

Alderman Sharonov *duly seconded the motion.*

Alderman O'Neil asked didn't we approve one.

Alderman Cavanaugh answered yes we did. This was the other one and we asked for additional information.

Alderman Roy stated the second one redid it and didn't ask for any money to be taken out.

Alderman Cavanaugh responded that was the first one. This was the same night. This is the second one and we were waiting for paperwork. This is money being taken out to repair the building.

Mayor Craig stated the motion on the floor is to receive and file.

Alderman Cavanaugh stated I am not going to support that. I want to approve this.

Mayor Craig *called for a vote. Alderman Long requested a roll call vote. Aldermen Long, Levasseur and Cavanaugh voted nay. Aldermen Roy, Sapienza, Sharonov, O'Neil, Terrio, E. Sapienza, Barry, Gamache and Stewart voted yea. The motion carried.*

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman O'Neil**, it was voted to recess the meeting pursuant to RSA 91-A:2 I(b) for consultation with legal counsel.*

Mayor Craig called the meeting back to order.

*On motion of **Alderman Barry**, duly seconded by **Alderman Levasseur**, it was voted to authorize the Mayor to sign off on the settlement.*

*On motion of **Alderman Roy**, duly seconded by **Alderman O'Neil**, it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Normand". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

City Clerk

ADJOURNMENT

- 34.** There being no further business, a motion is in order to adjourn.